

# The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

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## DEEPER THAN WORDS

This May 1991 Theosophists in many countries of the world celebrate the centenary death of H.P. Blavatsky. To some degree they know who she was. They have read about her. They have studied her teachings. A hundred years have given perspective in appreciation, and they honor her. They know hers was the directed spiritual energy behind the founding of the TS. They have read the words of her Teacher: "a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments, there was no second to her living fit for this work". (*The Mahatma Letters*, LV. p223). For that work she had been trained, and as we study her life we come more and more to see she was far more than the human dynamic individual but was indeed a veritable spiritual Force or Energy needed to awaken a material-ridden world. And this she did, initiating thus the ensuing karmic cycle of some 2160 years of the Aquarian Age.

She was sent by Those who were her Teachers to re-sound the keynotes of universal Truth for humanity. Of self-praise she would have nothing. Be loyal to the Truth, "loyal to the idea, rather than to my poor self", as the Mahatma K.H. phrased it. (*Op. cit.*). For that Truth she lived and to it she was the "link" for the whole TS.

Succinctly in words given to the Annual Convention of the American Section TS, April 22-23, 1888, she states:

the recognition of pure Theosophy. . . alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path. This should never be forgotten. [BCW, IX, p 243].

And from the same Letter:

But you must remember that although there must be local Branches of the Theosophical Society there can be no local Theosophists; and just as you all belong to the Society, so do I belong to you all. —(*Op. cit.* p.248)

And this clear declaration:

Ready to lay down our life any day for THEOSOPHY— that great cause of the Universal Brotherhood for which we live and breathe—and willing to shield, if need be, every true Theosophist with our own body, we yet denounce as openly and as virulently the distortion of the original lines upon which the Theosophical Society was primarily built, and the gradual loosing and undermining of the original system by the so phistry of many of its highest officers.—("Is Denunciation a Duty?"—BCW X, 199.

And here in words written only a few days

before she died we feel the very heart-beat of her life (Letter to the Fifth Annual Convention, American Section T.S., April 26-27, 1891 BCW XIII, p.174-5):

After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never-dormant wish of my heart, 'Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!' Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social strifes that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can save it from sinking entirely into that merely luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as older civilizations have done. In your hands, Brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

There is a work the TS is intended to do, or why did the Spiritual Energies bring about its founding? In our response to this and in our tribute to HPB today we must go deeper than words, beyond perhaps even sheer mental thought (which often can be a dissonance), seeking the very Spirit that was the same energizing force within HPB. She gave Meaning and Purpose and Direction to life for millions; and for the awakening few she gave Vision. Let us be true to what Vision we have and, in thought of her lift our hearts and minds to that same Ineffable Source which was her own undying inspiration.

—W.E.S.

## WHITE LOTUS DAY

Compiled from *Toronto Theosophical News*, May 1944, and May 1948.

The anniversary of H.P. Blavatsky's death on May 8, 1891, is commemorated by Theosophical groups the world over. This is done not with any idea of worship, but in grateful remembrance of the Light Bringer. From her early youth she studied, underwent discipline and otherwise prepared herself in the occult sciences. From the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875 to the time of her death in 1891, she gave her entire life in its service. The Society owes its existence to her years of self-sacrificing effort.

She lived during a period when the religious, scientific and philosophical thought of the western world was passing into a most negative state. Religion was dualistic, and insurmountable barriers were set up between God and man;

its morality was based upon reward and fear, its hope was an eternity in heaven and its fear an eternity in hell. Mysticism, that clear flame of spirit which soars to unity and binds man and God in union, was not encouraged. Science was engrossed in a materialistic, mechanistic theory, and all new discoveries were fitted to that theory. Philosophy toiled ponderously over ramifications of abstractions far removed from human life. The god-in-man was swathed and smothered in heavy, "dark garments of illusion."

It is perhaps difficult for those who were born on this side of the twentieth century mark to understand the conditions of 1875, the year in which the Society was founded. So many of the material things which we take for granted and accept as part and parcel of the scheme of things were unknown in those days. The first electric light lamps were produced around 1880 and many of the marvels of the electric age and the possibilities of the internal combustion engine were still undreamed of. The widespread use of these and other inventions had a profound effect on human psychology and contributed to the breaking down of many of the rigid accepted codes of the previous century. The latter part of that century was apparently "bursting at the seams" with new ideas, and the ground was being prepared for the new age which was coming.

The spirit of that age has gone—although its psycho-mental habits continue to affect us. Theosophy, the restatement of the ancient Divine Wisdom, was one of the great sweeping forces which acted like a yeast in the race consciousness to burst the mental barriers of that period. Other forces were the revolutionary discoveries by science in radioactivity. Eastern philosophy became known in the west through the writings of both eastern and western scholars, and its influence is slowly permeating western thinking. H.P.B.'s monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, a synthesis of science, religion and philosophy, was perhaps the greatest single factor in breaking down the old prison wall of thought.

On White Lotus Day it is well to remember the changes which have occurred in the past seventy years. H.P.B.'s stalwart individuality strides over the years and she lives today and will live for future generations in her dynamic writings, the source books of the modern Theosophical Movement.

Today, Theosophical Societies and students are working in almost every land. The Movement now includes several societies and many independent students, who whatever their separate views may be, are united in their deep and sincere respect for the pioneer leader, H.P. Blavatsky.

## H.P.B.

*Boris de Zirkoff*

"... I am the Mother and the Creator of the Society; it has my magnetic fluid. . . ." —*The Path*, Vol. VII, p. 123.

A hundred years have passed since H.P.B. was born, and forty years since the day when she disappeared from the sight of men and returned 'Home.' Still, H.P.B. lives. She lives in the spiritual movement which she started; she lives in the memory of her devoted disciples, who are passing on the message which she left to them, she lives in her writings which embody the teaching she proclaimed.

Scattered throughout the world, lost among dusty files of old publications, buried at times beneath the waters of oblivion, many of H.P.B.'s writings are hardly known at all to the average student who has heard of and seen but the well-known works from her pen.

To collect H.P.B.'s writings in one edition, to link them together in such a way as to show the gradual development in the method of teaching which H.P.B. employed, and to give to the student the opportunity of studying H.P.B. from all possible angles of her literary talents, in a complete series of volumes which would contain the entire production of her many-sided literary activity—such a plan, if carried out, would undoubtedly constitute a fitting tribute to the memory of this great Teacher, on the hundredth anniversary of her birth.

Today, after some seven years of intense labor along many lines, such an edition of H.P.B.'s collected writings is almost ready, and the first volume of the series is about to be published. . . . The writings of H.P.B. are the foundation-stone of the modern Theosophical Movement. Their study unifies. The principles of Truth they contain bind people together, and when a world-wide movement for Theosophical unification is abroad, the publication of the Centennial Edition of H.P.B.'s writings cannot but contribute to the ultimate realization of that unity. Above the controversies created by personal opinions, outside of arguments generated by brain-mind conceptions, stands unmoved and unchanged the primal basis of teachings, the doctrinal background against which is projected, as it were, the life of each earnest student of Theosophical philosophy. This background of doctrines can be found as a thread running through the various writings of H.P.B. It is a golden thread. It binds men and women in universal, all-embracing sympathy. It strengthens their nature; it leads to a world of Light and Peace. And to promote that Peace and Keep the Light from fading, this Edition of H.P.B.'s writings has been collected in loving

memory of her self-forgetful work for all that lives.

—(The above are extracts from an article in *Lucifer, the Light-Bringer*, July-August 1931. This was published at Point Loma by the HPB and WQJ Theosophical Clubs. We include it here sixty years later as a historic footnote recording the work of Boris de Zirkoff and the editorial staff. With A. Trevor Barker as editor, the first volume of what was then titled *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky* was published early in 1933 by Rider and Co. of London, and followed by Vols. 2, 3, and 4. Of the many British and other commentaries published by reviewers then, we quote only this from the *Sunday Referee*:

The first volume of H.P. Blavatsky's collected works marks an epoch in recognition. This publication is an avowal of the supremely important services rendered to nineteenth-century thought by one of the greatest souls who ever incarnated upon this planet. This noble monument is a most significant literary happening, and in this collected edition there will be found all the ideas whereupon our modern constructionism is based.

When WW II came all volumes were destroyed in the bombing of London. It was not until 1966 that the now wellknown *Blavatsky Collected Writings* began to be published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, concluding with Vol XIV in 1985. And of these there is now available a complete Index of all volumes. —Ed.)

## LETTERS FROM H.P. BLAVATSKY

*To Alexander Wilder, M.D.*

In *The Word*, Vol. I, No. 3, of June 1908, is an article of 8 pages titled "Letters from H.P. Blavatsky: To Alexander Wilder, M. D.", the first of others planned to follow in subsequent issues. Older students of Theosophy know that Dr. Wilder was of great help to Mme. Blavatsky in the early days of her arrival in the US, and especially with the literary work she had undertaken in writing *Isis Unveiled*, when English had not yet been mastered by her; and younger students may be helped to get a clearer picture of some aspects of those early days in the late 1870's by reading these Letters. Our space, however, prevents full publication here; but we give Dr. Wilder's introductory words, the first lines only of HPB's reply in which she talks about the early history of the Phoenicians, the Jews, and the Christians; and then continue with Wilder's story and HPB's response. (Alexander Wilder was an important contributor to *The Word*, published by H.W. Percival, New York City. He died September 18, 1908, at the age of 85.) —Ed.

The understanding had been reached that Mr. Bouton should publish Madame Blavatsky's manuscript of *Isis Unveiled*. It was placed in my hands by him with instruction to abridge it all that I thought best. It was an undesirable task,

but I did it with scrupulous regard to the interest of the publisher, and to what I esteemed to be just to the author. I was introduced to her about this time. She spoke of what I had done, with great courtesy, employing her favorite term to characterize what I had thrown out. She was about to begin a revision of the work, and asked me to indicate freely wherever I considered it at fault or not well expressed. It is hardly necessary to say that this was a delicate matter. Authors are sensitive even to morbidity, and prone to feel a criticism to be an exhibition of unfriendliness. Nevertheless, I faced the issue, and pointed out frankly what I considered fault of style, and also the importance of explaining her sources of information. She was frank to acknowledge her own shortcomings, but pleaded that she was not permitted to divulge the matters which I urged. We compared views, ethnic and historic, often not agreeing. I took the pains to embody many of these points in a letter, to which she made the following reply:

August.

Dr. A. Wilder,  
My Dear Sir:-

Your kind favor at hand only to-day, for my friend Mr. Marquette has proved an inaccurate postman, having some sunstruck patients to attend.

There are many parts in my Book *that I do not like* either, but the trouble is I do not know how to get rid of them without touching facts which are important, as arguments. You say that when I prove something, I prove it too much. There again you are right, but in such a work—(and the first one of some importance that I ever wrote, having limited myself to articles) in such a work when facts crowd and elbow each other in my brains, really one does not know sometimes where to stop. Your head is fresh, for you read it for the first time. Therefore you see all the faults and shortcomings, while my overworked brains and memory are all in a sad muddle, having read the manuscripts over and over again. I am really very, very thankful to you for your suggestions. I wish you made more of them.

...  
I suppose I gave you the headache by this time, so I close; I will forward you Saturday the last chapters of the Second Part if I can, but this part is not finished yet and I want your advice as to how to wind it up.

Truly and respectfully yours,  
H.P. BLAVATSKY.

The ensuing autumn and winter I delivered a course of lectures in a medical college in New York. This brought me from Newark several times each week and gave me an opportunity to call at the place on West Forty-seventh Street if there was occasion.

During the season previous Baron de Palm had died in Roosevelt Hospital. He was on intimate terms with the family group in West Forty-seventh Street, and had received necessary attentions from them during his illness. Whatever he possessed of value he bestowed upon them, but with the pledge or condition that his body should be cremated. This was a novel, not to say a shocking idea, to people generally. There was but one place for such a purpose in the United States. Dr. Francis Le Moyne had constructed it at Washington, in Western Pennsylvania. He was an old-time abolitionist, when this meant social proscription, and in 1844 was the candidate for the Liberty Party for Vice-President. He had advanced views on the disposal of the dead and had built the crematory for himself and family. The arrangements were made for the cremation of the body of the deceased Baron, as soon as winter had come to permit its transportation from New York. Colonel Olcott had charge of the matter. Being a "newspaper man" and rather fond of display, he induced a large party to go with him to see the first cremation in America. This was the introduction of this practice into this country.

During his absence I called at the house on Forty-seventh Street, but my ringing was not answered. I then wrote a note stating my errand. Madame Blavatsky answered at once as follows:

My Dear Doctor:

Now, that's too bad, but I really think you must have rung the *wrong* bell. I did not go out of the house for the last two months, and the servant is always in the kitchen until half-past nine or ten. Why did you not pull all the bells one after the other? Well, you must come Monday—as you have to come to town, and stop over till Tuesday. You can attend your College and sleep here the same, can't you? And Olcott will be back to talk your law business with you; but if you want something particular, or have some law affairs which are pressing, why don't you go to Judge, to 71 Broadway, Olcott's and Judge's office. Judge will attend to anything you want. He is a smart lawyer, and a faithful true friend to all of us. But of course you know better yourself how to act in your own business. Olcott will be home by Friday night I think. I could *not* go, though they expect me there today. To tell you the truth, I do not see the fun of spending \$40.00 or \$50.00 for the pleasure of seeing a man burnt. I have seen burnings of dead and living bodies in India sufficiently.

Bouton is an extraordinary man. He says to Olcott that it is for you to decide whether it will be one or two volumes, etc., and you tell me he needs no estimate of yours! He told you "how to go to work." Can't you tell us what he told you? It is no curiosity but business. As I am adding all kinds of esoteric and other matter in Part II,

I would like to know what I can write, and on what subjects I am to shut my mouth. It is useless for me to labor if it is all to be cut out. Will you please, dear doctor, tell me what I have to do? I am of your opinion about Inman; but *facts are facts*. I do not go against Christianity, neither against Jesus of Nazareth. I simply go for the skulls of theologians. Theology is neither Christianity nor religion. It is human and blasphemous flapdoodle. I suppose any one understands it. But how can I make a parallel between heathen or pagan worship and the Christian unless I give facts? It is facts and scientific discovery which kills exoteric and fetish worshipping Christianity, not what Inman or I can say. But laying Inman aside, read "Supernatural Religion" which had in less than 18 months six editions in England. The book is written by a Bishop, one of the most learned Theologians of the Church of England. Why he kills divine *Revelation* and *dogmas* and *Gospels* and all that.

Believe me, Dr. Wilder, a little and cowardly abuse will kill a book; a courageous and sincere criticism of this hypocritical, lying dirty crew—Catholic Clergy—will help to sell the book. I leave the Protestants and other Christian religions nearly out of question. I only go for Catholics. A pope who calls himself the Vicegerent of God on earth, and openly sympathizes with the Turks against the unfortunate Bulgarian Christians, is a Cain—a fiend; and if the French Liberal papers themselves publicly abuse him, Bouton must not fear that the book will be prevented in its sale because I advise the old Antichrist, who has compared himself for the last two years with all the Prophets of the Bible and with the "slain Lamb" himself—if I advise him moreover, to compare himself, while he is at work, to Saul; the Turkish Bashi-Bazook to David; and the Bulgarians to the Philistines. Let him, the old cruel Devil promise the Bashi-Bazook (David) his daughter the Popish Church (Michal) in marriage if he brings him 100 forekins of the Bulgarians.

I have received letters from home. My aunt sends me a piece of poetry by the famous Russian author and poet—J. Tourgeneff. It was printed in all the Russian papers, and the Emperor has forbidden its publication from consideration (and politics I suppose) for old Victoria. My aunt wants me to translate it and have it published here in the American newspapers, and most earnestly she appeals for that I cannot write poetry. God knows the trouble I have with my prose. But I have translated every line word for word (eleven quatrains in all). Can you put them in verses so as to preserve the rhyme and rhythm, too? It is a splendid and thrilling thing entitled "Crocket at Windsor," the idea being a vision of the Queen, who looks upon a croquet game and sees the balls chased by the mallet, transformed into rolling heads of women, girls

and children tortured by the Turks. Goes home; sees her dress all covered with gore, calls on the British rivers and waters for help to wash out the stain, and hears a voice answered, "No, Majesty no, this innocent blood,"—"You can never wash out—nevermore," etc.

My dear Doctor, can you do me a favor to write me half a page or so of a "Profession of faith," to insert in the first page or pages of Part II? Just to say briefly and eloquently that it is not against Christ or the *Christ*-religion that I battle. Neither do I battle against any *sincere*, *true* religion, but against theology and Pagan Catholicism. If you write me this I will know how to make variations on this theme without becoming guilty of false notes in your eyes and the sight of Bouton. Please do; you can do it in three minutes. I see that none of your symbolists, neither Payne Knight, King, Dunlap, Inman, nor Higgins, knew anything about the *truths* of initiation. All is exoteric superficial guess work with them. 'Pon my word, without any compliment, there's Taylor alone and yourself, who seem to grasp truth *intuitively*. I have read with the greatest pleasure your edition of the "Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries!" You are right. Others know Greek better, but Taylor knew Plato thousand times better; and I have found in your short fragments much matter which for the life of me I do not know where you could have learned it. Your guesses are so many hits right on the true spot. Well, you ought to go East and get initiated.

Please come on Monday. I will have a bed ready for you Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, and I will be expecting you to dinner all these days. If you cannot come until Monday, do tell me what instructions Bouton have you, and what are the precise orders for mutilations, will you!

Esoterically yours in true Platonism.

H.P. BLAVATSKY.

## ON THE FEAR OF DEATH

David Britton

The following is reprinted with permission from *The Friend*, a Quarter Weekly Journal, (London), July 6, 1990. Theosophical leaders will respect the careful thought here expressed, and perhaps gain from its presentation; and then in their own minds they might wish to add theosophical interpretations of their own.  
—Ed.

It has been pleasantly surprising to find so much interest shown recently in the question of "death and after" in the columns of *The Friend*. As our modern culture, and the Society of Friends itself, has tended to suppress this topic, it seems to me that the interest shown is entirely healthy, and long overdue. For many years nothing was known about near-death experiences. People only began to talk about their own ex-

periences, as Elizabeth Kübler-Ross has reported, when they were encouraged to do so, and felt that it was allowable. It would be a great mistake, I think, for Friends to put the lid back on at the moment, even when this is done in the interests of what could be called a higher point of view—that is to say, that point of view which roots itself in the experience of eternity, and for which the question of our individual survival in some kind of intermediate world, or worlds, is a matter of small interest or concern.

I have a strong suspicion here, that when someone taking the higher point of view uses it to suppress other people's interest in a lower point of view, it is because their own occupation of the high ground is tenuous and insecure, and also inclined to be a bit flat and abstract. Their rather slight hold on this high ground will often lead people into stridently defensive assertions that eternity is in this world, is "here and now", and has nothing whatever to do with a view one way or the other about a life beyond physical death.

I believe it is indeed possible to enter eternity in this life, on this gross earth with its crude conditions, its suffering, and its temporality. But the recorded experience of mystics from many traditions, point to an attitude very different from lofty superiority. A person who reaches the condition of eternity while in the flesh would have to have traversed internally tremendous worlds of communal and individual and supra-individual experience, worlds that await most of us after physical death. Such a person would enjoy, and radiate, not only fearlessness, but a many-sided richness, creative balance, humor, tolerance, and a great generosity of spirit. He would therefore allow in others that which he had undergone himself. He would possess a comprehensive understanding of the complexity as well as the simplicity of the journey. He will have internalized the worlds, he will be capable of ascending or descending the "ladder" at will, and able to discern clearly, with empathy, where other people are at.

Protestantism does not allow the existence of these intermediate worlds. But they are recorded in Dante, in Blake, in Swedenborg in the Upanishads, and in countless primitive mythologies. We already have the basis of a "perennial cosmology", if we know where to look, and how to develop the tradition. We should not allow our Protestant tradition to throttle us here. And we should not allow the truth that eternity is "here and now" to operate in us as a small-minded, narrow and excluding attitude. We should certainly not have to put up with it in its pure secular form, which says, in effect, that eternity begins and ends here, in this world; there is no other world, no permanent union with God, because physical death is the end, and one should be grateful for what one has

had.

There can also be something both desperate and dishonest about this attitude—a taking refuge in what seems like a highminded rejection of crude “rewards and punishments” thinking, in order not to have fully to confront in oneself the painful fact of death, perhaps a painful fear, and perhaps an even more painful and hidden longing for immortality. Allowing oneself to believe in immortality can be, for some people, an extremely painful experience, because it opens the person up to the risk of the returning pain of doubt. Out of this recurrent pain and fear only the struggle that awakens our spirit will deliver us. And that itself is painful and protracted.

I do not speak here from a higher point of view, but as one for whom this particular struggle is still raging. Dr Johnson, in spite of his sincere religion, spoke of the fear of death never having left him for a single day or hour. I do not feel quite like that, but I am very much in his camp. Having a religion and religious experience, having a specific religious belief in immortality, or even a religious *experience* of immortality in the flesh, do not necessarily banish the fear of death for certain people, though they might mitigate it. Many conscious atheists can die serenely, while many religious can die in fear. In Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, Ivan screams in terror for three days as the crisis approached, “like being packed into a black bag”. I am aware that not many Friends are recorded as having experienced such fear. That would be entirely to the credit of the Society—if I could be sure that it did not mask suppression of the natural fears of other Friends, too ashamed to speak.

I think one has as much right to express this fear as to express one's longing for immortality. It is part of the spectrum of human experience, and it should be allowed its voice. We don't know very clearly why some people are so fearful in this area, and others so cool and serene, but we do know that it seems to have more to do with temperament, and with life-experiences, whether early traumas or satisfactions, later disappointments or fulfillments, than with conscious beliefs, whichever way they tend. Speaking again for myself, taking up a religious belief in immortality is in no sense a refuge from my fear of death. I wish it were. For me, the belief is an act of daring, evoking all my latent fears of death, forcing me to struggle emotionally and spiritually with those fears. My first option, at a time in my life when the fear was very strong, was one of assumed indifference to the question of survival, and of concentration upon eternity in the passing moment. Perfectly valid, indeed absolutely right, at the right time, and as part of a balanced and comprehensive outlook; but in my own situation it was a dishonest evasion, an exclusive and lop-sided attitude that

did me little good. Nowadays I try to apply the old Chinese maxim—“Walk on both legs.”

## We Learn From Analogy

As he was passing out of this life, the Lord Buddha enjoined his disciples to “remember that all things are composite.” As an approach to an understanding of this fundamental truth, think of a human being as a threefold entity. First there is the God within him, his own individual and indivisible link with the Divine in Nature. Its home is somewhere in the vastness of Mother Space. Its own ray or child is the man himself, the Thinker. He is the eternal pilgrim, child of the stars, ever-enduring, and ever-changing, who persists from life to life. During his sojourn on earth, he inhabits a body which in its own turn enshrines the personal nature, the self of emotions and desires and sensations.

Now there is a direct correspondence between the constitution of man as just outlined, and the structure of Nature. He derives the several parts of his being from corresponding elements in the Universe. Thus, as man is shown to be threefold, Nature is also threefold, and we have technical names for the three elements in its structure. Thus the God within man is native to because derived from, the department of nature called ‘Gods’; those realms and their inhabitants which transcend the powers of our feeble minds to grasp. Man, the Thinker, is a Monad, a representative of a certain class of monads which people the spaces of space and corresponds to that department of nature we call ‘Monads.’ Then as the body of a man is composed of atoms of many kinds, the term ‘Atoms’ as applied to the universe signifies the corporeal aspect of nature, whether it be on the visible physical plane or on the subtler planes of invisible substance. All of those atoms are living things, destined in future aeons to become monads, and after further uncounted aeons to finally evolve into Gods.

Bearing in mind this close analogy between Gods, Monads and Atoms in the universe, and the Inner God, the Thinker, and the personal self of the man, we may turn to a third line of correspondence that enters into the picture, and that is the structure of a Mystery-School. Such a school of divine learning is not arbitrarily conceived, but it is built upon the very structure of Nature herself for the reason that in the School the candidate learns to acquaint himself with Divine Nature, and to unravel her secrets. Thus there is the outer court, as it is called, that aspect of the teaching that is adapted to the needs of the public, and for those who visit the school for the purpose of deriving benefit and inspiration from the lectures and classes. This is the outer veil, and corresponds to corporeal nature, or in the case of man, to his physical and personal nature. Then, corresponding to the man's intellectual



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powers, there is the Temple within the Mystery-School. There the Teacher instructs his students in the mysteries of Nature. He can help his disciples to adjust their lives, and instruct them in a way that cannot be given to the public. Then lastly, within the Temple there is the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Holy of Holies, where only the pledged few may enter. It is here that the Teacher reveals himself in the true role of spiritual Preceptor. And it is precisely because there is a Holy of Holies within the heart of every man in which he may meet his own Teacher that there is a real spiritual basis for the structure of the Mystery-School.

—L. Gordon Plummer

## OBITER DICTA: CASUAL REMARKS

*Amanuensis*

As far back as the time of H.P. Blavatsky, and continuing for over half a century Henry T. Edge, to whom HPB handed the mss of *The Voice of the Silence*, asking what he thought of it, wrote many learned and technical articles on Theosophy; but he could also compose in the vein of this article, written, under the pen name above, in the next to the last year of his life, and printed in *The Theosophical Forum*, February 1945.

—Ed.

"OH, I say, wouldn't it be a good thing to write an article on. . .?"

"But surely you yourself are the one to write said article?"

"Ah but then you see, I'm so dumb, I never can put anything down on paper; but you. . ."

"Well, I'll just scrawl a note of it and throw it into a drawer I keep of possible subjects for future articles."

### DON'T MAKE SWEEPING STATEMENTS

Theosophical speakers and writers should avoid sweeping statements, such as that all lecturing Swamis are no good, or that all Spiritualists are sweeping headlong to perdition, or all Christians are clinging to absurd and outworn beliefs, or that all diseases spring directly from wrong thought. This of course gives opponents a capital opportunity to make sweeping statements about Theosophy and include us indiscriminately in a class that believe in transmigration into animals and other preposterous ideas. Besides, nothing is easier than to challenge the general law by bringing up the awkward exception; and though it is quite all right for general laws to have exceptions, the exceptions should not be numerous enough to swamp the general law. The word 'all,' whether expressed or implied, is a dangerous customer; and it is better to deal in 'some' or 'most' or

'very often' or 'usually', or some other such harmless expression which is much easier to climb out of if necessary.

### IS IT A PHENOMENON OR HAS IT A PHYSICAL EXPLANATION?

My dear Sir, every phenomenon occurring on the physical plane has a physical explanation; it also has an occult explanation. And these two explanations are not alternative or conflicting; they are concurrent and interdependent. You profess not to believe in miracles, and to hold that all so-called miracles are simply manifestations of laws of nature which are not so familiar as other laws of nature. You profess this, but yet you have not quite got out of your blood the old supernaturalistic way of looking at things. Else how could you ask such a question? I remember a discussion about globelighting or fireballs and the weird way in which they behave: they act just like human beings or mischievous sprites. Some said they were occult phenomena or 'elementals' or something, and others said they were just manifestations of electricity and magnetism. But elementals, etc., if they are to act on the physical plane, must use physical means of one kind or another; and on the other had electricity in whatever form is the manifestation of occult forces. We need to unify our thought and to give up the habit of departmentalizing it.

### WHAT ABOUT ADAM AND EVE AND THE SERPENT?

Read this from *Isis Unveiled*, about a Gnostic teaching; and put it into your pipe and smoke it:

Impotent to annihilate the Tree of Knowledge, which grows in his sphere as in every one of the planetary regions, but bent upon detaching 'man' from his spiritual protectress, Ilda-Baoth forbade him to eat of its fruit, for fear it should reveal to mankind the mysteries of the superior world. But Sophia-Achamoth who loved and protected the man whom she had animated, sent her own genius Ophis in the form of a serpent, to induce man to transgress the selfish and unjust command. And 'man' suddenly became capable of comprehending the mysteries of creation —II, 184-5

The Story in *Genesis* is a confused version of one of the cardinal teachings of the Ancient Wisdom, and was derived by the Biblical scribes and compilers from oriental sources. It allegorizes a vital stage in the evolution of man, when man, from having been an innocent creature stagnating in a state of paradisiacal bliss, acquired the power of self-consciousness and freewill, and with it the power of sinning. But this dangerous gift was necessary and is ultimately man's Savior and Redeemer, when from his mistakes he at last recognizes the right use of freewill. The Bible says 'Serpent' and not 'Devil.' Who is responsible for turning the Light-Bringer into a



Devil?

### UPS AND DOWNS

Some familiar sayings and illustrations seem quite stale and trite, but there may at any time come a moment when for the first time we realize that they are true after all. For instance, it is commonplace to say that, when we are on a hike, if we expect to get anywhere, we shall have to make many ups and downs; but we are progressing all the time, and we may feel just as happy (or even happier) when we are going down as when we are toiling up. And so, when we are having one of our gloomy periods and seem to be losing ground and going backwards, we are probably simply progressing according to the normal plan of wave motion, which goes in alternate phases of ups and downs. Probably, I said; which means that so long as we have the same end in view and have not lost heart, we shall progress both in the ascent and the descent. W.Q. Judge has said somewhere that students are apt to go on with an endeavor past the point where they ought to stop for awhile. And this applies to progress in general: we ought to follow the methods of Nature, which advances by alternate urges and rests; and after using our will-power in strenuousness, use it for a time in deliberate and planned relaxation.

That diagram, too, of evolution, with its downward arc and upward arc, is a line of continual progress: there is no turning and retracing, but the same onward sweep carries the pilgrim through both arcs, and one arc is just a continuation of the other.

### FORGIVENESS

The word in the Greek Testament is (*aphesis*), meaning a 'sending away, letting go,' so translated by Robert Young, LL.D., in his *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*. The Greek Lexicon gives the meaning 'a setting free.' The corresponding verb, 'to forgive' is in Greek (*aphiemi*), having the same sense, and also meaning 'to discharge an obligation.' Both these senses are found in the Bible. In *Matthew*, vi, for instance, we read: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. . . . If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." *Mark*, ii, 28-9 says: "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men. . . but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness." The forgiveness of sins is mentioned in *Acts*, vi, 31; xiii, 38; xxvi, 28. And Paul in *Ephesians*, i, 7, and *Colossians*, i, 14, speaks of forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ.

It seems clear enough that the general idea is that of getting rid of impurity from guilt, or of becoming 'justified' by the discharge of an obligation. Theosophists have sometimes in-

veighed against the doctrine that a belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can set us free from the natural consequences of our own misdeeds, and that without regard for the evil which those misdeeds may have inflicted on theirs. But such an extreme view as this can hardly be considered as representative of Christian belief. Grace received from God through the intercession of the Son may make a man whole and justify him; but surely not to the extent of abrogating divine justice. It is difficult to believe that a right-minded person whether Christian or not would wish to escape making due reparation for his mistakes.

## PROCLAMATION

[From the Report of the First Convention of the T.S. in America, session of April 29, 1895]

[We have printed this before; but it is good from time to time to recall these words and to remember also the historic occasion they refer to. This was the establishing of the Theosophical Society in America, considered by some a 'break' from the TS Adyar, but by others a necessary step for the welfare of Theosophy and the Movement. The quality and tone of this Proclamation speak wisely for themselves.—Ed].

*The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in first Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of theosophical societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.*

*To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, whose intentions aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of man and Nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.*

*It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose effort is directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a scientific basis for ethics.*

*And lastly, it invites to its membership all those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the **Path** to tread in this.*

## FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Armand Courtois, Sr., Belgium: Please allow me to congratulate you on your spirited defense of authentic Theosophy in the E.T. for Jan.-Feb.'91. Perhaps it will be necessary to supplement or even to correct certain details in texts of over a hundred years old, but the Message as a whole will stand. Principles remain, applications vary, extensions are always possible. As our study of the Fundamentals widens and deepens, our insight will evolve while yet discovering new questions and problems. As long as actual study and real search are maintained, there cannot be much danger of our deviating into fanciful personal versions of Theosophy. To this end, it is probably wiser to stick to the original works than to go in for those of self-styled 'Successors'. While admittedly difficult and complicated, and sometimes in appearance disorderly, the original books carry a magnetism of authenticity rarely present in later attempts at simplification or systematization. Perhaps these are helpful to some, but there is often a risk of contamination by personal interpretations and 'esoteric' disclosures. It is understandable that people should be grateful to those through whose channel they first entered into a vivifying contact with Theosophy in any of its forms. Unfortunately, however, as some of the "Successors" also posed as gurus (which they perhaps were to some extent for some people), faith and loyalty could easily become misguided. This could explain why there are still those who find so much to admire in Mrs. Besant and "Bishop" Leadbeater. I would not presume to judge these TS leaders as persons, but their "theosophy" was certainly much at variance with the original. No doubt, followers of any kind or level should understand that, at best, they are only students and companions engaged on the same great task, without trying to wield authority over others in matters spiritual or moral. This will make for a healthier Movement and enhance the position of Theosophy in the world.

On a minor point, if I may be so bold as to say something against Dr. de Purucker in your pages, Why does he state (p.3) that the new Messianic cycle of 2160 years started with H.P.B.'s birth, whereas she herself says in a footnote to her *Esoteric Character of the Gospels* that the cycle occurred in 2410 and 2555 BC? As she uses the figure of 2155 rather than the generalized symbolic figure of 2160, that would place the start of the new cycle in 1900.

C.P., Seattle, Washington: The Blavatsky *Collected Writings*: What an utterly stunning array of wisdom teachings! Surely no Theosophist worthy of the name can afford to remain unfamiliar with this wellspring of the

universal Doctrine!

For less than the cost of a single college credit, or a pricey "new age" seminar, one can now acquire a complete set of the collected writings, some of the most important spiritual instructions of the past two (or 20?) centuries. One can only wonder if all of the lodges, libraries, and organizations which style themselves Theosophical have availed themselves of these treasures? Students of the Gnosis, of comparative religions, of the ancient wisdom in whatever form, will find in the collected writings material enough to inspire them for decades to come. And throughout them all, and the astounding knowledge of their author, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky!

To Boris de Zirkoff, editor of the *Collected Writings*, to the Point Loma Theosophists who launched the series, and to all the loyal Theosophists of Pasadena, Adyar, ULT and other organizations who saw the volumes to completion: we all owe them our profound and lasting gratitude. The dissemination of these writings should have the same salutary effects on the Theosophical Movement that the release of *The Mahatma Letters* had earlier in this century. They will at once be reinvigorating to genuine Theosophical teaching efforts and unmasking to the sordid imitations. May they be circulated far and wide! And soon!

Joan M. Sckrabulis, Lutherville, Md.—Your recent publication on the life of Apollonius (*True Messiah: The Story of Appollonius of Tyana, 3BC-AD96*) is a much needed and worthwhile effort. Mr. Malpas is to be commended for his ability to present such a lovely account of the life of this great Pythagorean sage. His book inspired me to the point where I set upon conducting my own extensive research and formulated the conclusion that the Jesus/Paul mythos had been developed by initiates of the school at Ephesus, founded by Apollonius. Unlike Mr. Malpas, I could not restrain the temptation to editorialize by findings which I presented at a recent lecture at the Lodge. One member declared, at the conclusion of my lengthy dissertation, "who cares." Nevertheless, I presented my case based upon the works of Josephus, Acts of the Apostles, and the history of Apollonius, Acts of the Apostles, and the history of Appollonius (Philostratus) after studying the Malpas book, a work by G.R.S. Mead, and other works I found at the Milton Eisenhower Library of Johns Hopkins University. The key is found in two places: at Puteoli and in Arcadia."

Wane Kell, Calabasas, Calif., (Dec. 20, 1990): I've often thought of H.P.B.'s "promise" of the possible coming of one of the "Teachers" by 1975 (end of *The Key to Theosophy*); then of Judge's assurance that it will be She "beyond

doubt, and, will *we* be able to recognize the Worker and help in the Work—and, lend a hand and a willing heart and mind?

How have we tended the 'field' entrusted to us with the symbolic 'talents'? What accounting may we render? Is it for us only we ask this, or is it for the benefit of the world, and of all those who follow, seeking the "Path She showed—the Masters, who are behind."

In all the records of our history She was the first who was able to point to Them, the Masters, the Great Lodge of Adepts—the golden Heart of the Inner Life. This alone is a bench-mark that distinguishes this movement from those of the past when the "opposition" ruled and imposed secrecy or death!

It is not psychism, or good feelings, or the "New Age" that has staying value, but only the warrior spirit—the living for truth—we may hear the sweet bells, but the memory of the Light that Illumines All is the one that lures us on to work, to study, to confabulated and weld a brotherhood of confiding and generous minds into a bond that makes for real Brotherhood—at least in embryo—a nucleus on "this side."

These are some of my thoughts this season, as we approach the Solstice again and the change of life's seasons for our world.

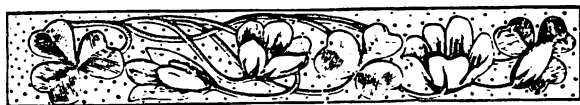
## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### Quake Tolls Compared

WASHINGTON: Earthquakes killed nearly as many people last year as in the entire decade of the 1980s, the U.S. Geological Survey reported yesterday. More than 52,000 fatalities were reported in earthquakes around the world in 1990, according to the geologists. None was in the United States. By comparison, quakes claimed 57,000 lives during the whole decade of the 80s. The bulk of the 1990 victims died in the June 21 quake in western Iran that killed about 50,000 people, the agency said.

—Associated Press, *S.D. Union*, Feb. 12, 1991

(See *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XIII, p. 68, *et seq.*: "1890! On the New Year's Morning": "... nine was a digit terribly dreaded by the ancients. . . . a symbol of great changes, cosmic and social, and of versatility, in general; the sad emblem of the fragility of human things. . . ."—Ed)



### The Esoteric She

Under the above title a booklet of "Articles on Madame Blavatsky's Life, Work, and Teachings", has been compiled and edited by Daniel H. Caldwell, and is available now. Among the chapters are: "H.P. Blavatsky's Occult Phenomena in the New York Days"; "Occult Vibrations: A Fragment of a Conversation with H.P.B. in 1888", "Yours till Death and After, H.P.B."; and others very pertinent in light of a century's history. Illustrated. Paperback \$5.00.

### The Voice of the Silence

A valued contribution to the centenary of H.P. Blavatsky's passing on May 8, 1891, is this reproduction of HPB's masterpiece *The Voice of the Silence*. It is bound as exact to the original edition as possible; cover fabric and color are matched as closely as available materials allow; a stamping plate was manufactured to duplicate the cover stamp; and the book liner was specially ordered and color matched to original—green one side, white on the other. The book is composed of 7 signatures of 16 pages each, all hand-folded; printed on a slightly off-white linen bond paper, hand-sewn and cut and bound to exact size by the binders. Everything possible has been done to reproduce this volume as authentically as possible.

This is a very limited edition; the price is \$20.00 US or \$23.00 Canadian, postage included. Order by writing to: Edmonton Theosophical Society, Box 4804, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5G6.

### For the H.P. Blavatsky Centenary

A Special Commemorative Card is Available George Bush has one; and now Madame Blavatsky will have one. The card is 2-1/2" by 3-1/2". A picture of HPB is on the front and biographical information the back. Only 200 cards will be printed, and are available for \$2.00 each, packaged with a special plastic hard case.

Order from: Michell B. Graye, P.O. Box 1844, Tucson, AZ. 85702

### Centennial HPB Poster from Point Loma Publications

A Blavatsky Centennial poster has been produced by John Odam Design Associates of Del Mar, Calif. for PLP. A beautiful three color production, it includes a quotation from the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, and the Theosophical Society motto "There is no Religion Higher than Truth" in English and Sanskrit. It is 11" by 17" and is available from PLP for \$3.00.

14,000 of Light magazine, vol. I, 1881 to Vol. 19, 1899

John Cooper, lecturing on Theosophical subjects in Auckland, New Zealand, January 1-16, 1990, has sent us a survey of the contents of this magazine edited by M.A.Oxon, and now in the Archives of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand at Epsom, Auckland (Vols. 5 to 9) and in the archives of the HPB Lodge in Auckland.

The issues checked were from Vol. I of 1881 up to and including Vol. 19, 1899. There are later volumes of *Light* which are not available to check.

Fascinating for historians and theosophical researchers, we give here only a smattering of the many pages received: M.A. Oxon on Theosophy; Gerald Massey on the Theosophists; C.C. Massey, on *Isis*; CCM on astral light; Kid-dle incident; W.T.Brown letter; APS (Sinnott) on the Brothers; Teapot phenomenon; HPB letter; HSO letter; Letter by Mainland; SD on verge of publication; Review of SD; B. Keightley on the ES; Boehme and the SD; *Voice of the Silence* reviewed; Druzes; HPB powers; Conway, HPB, Judge; H.T.Edge letter; Edge on *Light on the Path*; TS & Judge; on Judge Case; Real Origins of the TS; HPB Posthumous Memoirs, etc., etc.

For additional information address: John Cooper, P.O.Box 532, Bega, N.S.W. Australia, 2550.

L'eta Dell' Acquario, Torino, Italy

We note with appreciation that this monthly journal, edited by Bernardino del Boca, in its Winter 1990-1 issue #69, gives notice of Point Loma Publications' 12-volume edition of *Esoteric Teachings* by G. de Purucker, calling special attention to No. VIII: "Gods, Monads, Life-Atoms", with subtitles: Health and Disease; Good and Evil; Karman and Free Will.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery* By Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. Point Loma Publications, paper, \$14.95.

Recent Gallop polls reveal that as many as 38 million Americans believe in reincarnation in the ancient belief that the soul is reborn in a continual search for spiritual perfection. While many people associate reincarnation with Eastern cultures, it has lived as well throughout the West. This provocative, exhaustive book compiles observations and commentary from many who believe, and details reincarnation's following throughout history. The authors, among the world's leading experts in reincarnation, present death and rebirth as viewed by Plato, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and others. And, of course, Carl Jung, who

wrote, "I could well imagine that I might have lived in former centuries. My life as I lived it had often seemed to me like a story that has no beginning and no end."

Any person who seeks to re-evaluate life will find this comprehensive review a source of stimulation for, while it provides many conclusions, it also puts forth many questions. An academic zeal pervades the care with which this volume was assembled, but it reads like a great journey through the minds of lively, curious people who wondered, like Job, if man dies, shall he live again? The approach is refreshing, positive. "Too long has man been the producer of deserts, depressions, and downright destruction. There are better litanies, stronger credos, more generous philosophies than the polemics of theology-hating materialists. The harvest of negation is in, and it does not nourish either our bodies or our souls." This book obviously affirms the concept of reincarnation, but it includes dissenting voices. Altogether these thoughts seem to espouse a universe of hope and promise.

—*The Book Reader*, March-April 1991

*H.P. Blavatsky: the Mystery* by Gottfried de Purucker, in collaboration with Katherine Tingley. Published 1974 by Point Loma Publications, Inc. 260 pages \$6.95

An editorial foreword to this book declares: "The world is more ready to understand Helena Petrovna Blavatsky now than it was forty years ago when this book first appeared serially in *The Theosophical Path*." Agreed, but it is surely a work that would have been well used by the Theosophical community during that time. Personally, I would rather have this one book on my library shelf than a hundred or more less worthy works that have been published with a Theosophical imprint in the past forty years.

Better late than never. Now that it is available in book form no doubt it will be welcomed and increasingly called for by students of Theosophy and all others who seek to unfathom the mystery that was H.P. Blavatsky.

Those looking for a biography will not find it here save for a few notes appended at the end by the editors. Instead, they will be treated to a first-class exposition of the principal Theosophical concepts, including cycles, the constitution of man, the destiny of humanity, evolution, karma and reincarnation. Only against such a background can the 'mystery' be hinted at.

The brilliance of Dr. de Purucker's scheme staggers the imagination. This is a real Theosophical biography. It is largely devoid of personality references. The reader is given assistance to understand what lies behind the veil of the mystery, but of course only he—or she—can

lift the veil. From these pages one receives the impression of greatness but must judge for oneself what degree of that quality was possessed by the subject. It must be obvious that those worthy of the mantle described herein must be few and far between. Whom else does it fit?

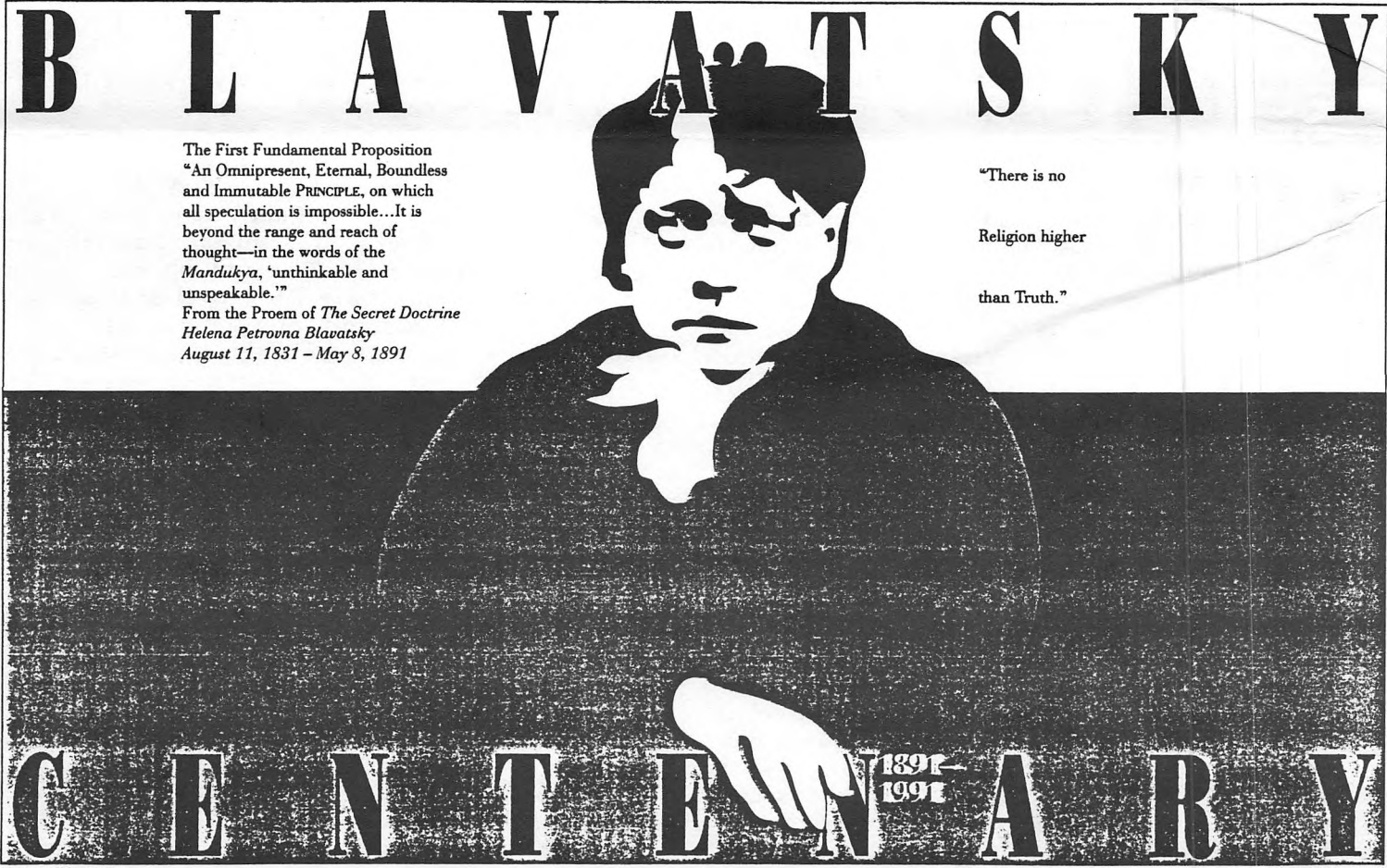
I hesitate to pick out one or two chapters from the many because we are asked to consider a system rather than its several separate parts. However, those dealing with "The Great Sages and Seers" struck me as being exceptionally helpful in unravelling the delicate threads that usually bind this subject. As sketched in these chapters, the 'mystery' stands out in clear perspective, and her relationship to those she served can perhaps be better understood.

Many thanks to the publishers. This was worth waiting for.

—Ted G. Davy

### Contributions

The following contributions received since our last reporting are hereby gratefully acknowledged: R.W.D., \$20.00; E.&K.S., \$5.00; C.C., \$5.00; M.N., \$20.00; W.R.L., \$100.00; E.S., \$319.20; O.H., \$10.00; \$10.00; H.M., \$98.38; A.K., \$20.00; S.S., \$1.48; J.L., \$20.00; D.E., \$18.00 N.S., \$4.50; E.L., \$35.00 W.D.T., \$15.00.



**B L A V A T S K Y**

The First Fundamental Proposition  
"An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless  
and Immutable PRINCIPLE, on which  
all speculation is impossible...It is  
beyond the range and reach of  
thought—in the words of the  
*Mandukya*, 'unthinkable and  
unspeakable.'"  
From the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*  
Helena Petrovna Blavatsky  
August 11, 1831 – May 8, 1891

"There is no  
Religion higher  
than Truth."

**C E N T E N A R Y** 1891-1991